TAPPING INTO THE TRADITION: TRACING THE GRECO ROMAN ALLUSIONS AND MEDIEVAL MILIEU IN ‘THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF DR. FAUSTUS’

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the classical and medieval allusions profusely used by Christopher Marlowe, a Renaissance dramatist in The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Dr. Faustus. Dr. Faustus, an Elizabethan drama contains a unique blend of classical mythology that seems distinct, from that in the other plays by Marlowe since it has a dramatic role and does not just serve purpose of metaphoric and aesthetic beautification typical of Renaissance. The medieval tradition is well represented by the pen of Marlowe who not only is able to cater to the Middle English everyman but makes modern day man aware of what the medieval tradition of mystery and morality plays was all about. Marlowe was true to his age but also contributed largely to set a different kind of drama taste for his audience. Dr. Faustus is a historical document not because it is set in historical times or it talks about history like Shakespeare’s history plays but because it picks up from Greco Roman allusions, geography, references and illustrations for its narrative- the story of a modern Renaissance man.

Keywords: Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, Classical Mythology, English Medieval tradition, Renaissance, Drama